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Colin Brennan said it takes him about an hour and 10 minutes to ride the Metra train from Vernon Hills to his job in downtown Chicago.

Brennan said he's glad to hear Metra will be adding more morning express trains to the North Central Service line, which he hopes will shorten his daily commute.

"I think that would help," said Brennan. "Right now, there are a lot of stops in the middle that it seems like nobody gets off at."

At a press conference at the Buffalo Grove train station Tuesday, Metra's executive director Phil Pagano announced a new schedule that will increase the number of North Central trains from 20 to 22 and provide two morning and afternoon rush-hour express trains.

The North Central line runs from Antioch to Chicago, and includes stops in Lake Villa, Round Lake Beach, Grayslake, Libertyville, Mundelein, Vernon Hills, Prairie View, Buffalo Grove, Wheeling, Prospect Heights, O'Hare Airport, Rosemont, Schiller Park, Franklin Park and River Grove.

The new schedule, which will take effect Monday, is posted on Metra's web site at [www.metrarail.com](http://www.metrarail.com).

Pagano said commuters boarding at 7:06 a.m. in Buffalo Grove arrive downtown more than an hour later. Under the new schedule, the express train leaving that same station at 7:18 a.m. gets downtown in 53 minutes.

The two express trains, which arrive at Union Station at 8:03 a.m. and 8:11 a.m., each stop at half the stations along the route between Antioch and Prospect Heights, then run non-stop from O'Hare to Chicago. The outbound express trains leave Union Station at 4:58 p.m. and 5:01 p.m.

Nine minutes

"The net result is they're saving about nine minutes," he said, adding that commuters traveling from stations farther away would save more time.

Earlier this year, Metra doubled the number of trains along the line from 10 to 20. Pagano said North Central ridership increased by 41 percent between April and June.

"We've made a major investment in this area to reduce traffic gridlock," said U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-10th, of Highland Park, who worked at the federal level to secure funding for North Central line improvements.

Many commuters also want to see expanded evening and weekend service.

Deerfield resident Thoreau May, pastor of the Eternal Love Baptist Church in Lincolnshire, said he takes the train three or four times a week from Buffalo Grove to Chicago. He said having express trains, especially during the early morning rush, is a "good thing."

"If they could get weekend service too, that would also help," he said.

Jeff Berman, a Buffalo Grove village trustee, who also rides the North Central line, said the addition of express trains is an "incremental step in the right direction."

However, Berman said there needs to be other improvements to the line such as adding even more express trains, making schedule times more convenient for commuters and reducing service delays.

"It would not be a positive thing if there wasn't a commitment to add even more trains and other service time benefits," he said. "You need to take both into account to call it a positive step."

Pagano pledged to continue to make improvements to the North Central line service, including possibly adding another morning and evening train within the next few months. However, Pagano said there are no immediate plans or funding for weekend service.